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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Information Radio-Television Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2403

March 10, 1989

CROWDER NOMINATED -- President George Bush has selected Richard Thomas Crowder, a Pillsbury Co. executive, to be undersecretary of agriculture for international affairs and commodity programs. Since 1975, Crowder has been with the Pillsbury Co. Most recently he has been president of Pillsbury's Distron Division, which oversees the Burger King Corp. He received his B.A. and M.S. from Virginia Tech and his Ph.D. from Oklahoma State University. He served in the U.S. Army in Germany from 1962 to 1964.

SEC. CLAYTON YEUTTER is scheduled to speak at an Ag Day Reception March 20 in Washington, D.C., and is scheduled to testify before the House Committee on Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs on March 23.

CATFISH SEX CHANGE -- A catfish sex change may mean big bucks for producers. Aquaculture is now a \$500 million industry in the U.S. -- catfish processing during January was up 4 percent from a year ago. Since male catfish grow faster than females, scientists at USDA's Catfish Genetics Research Laboratory in Stoneville, Miss., are working on a hormone called DHT that may turn young female catfish into males. Contact: Gary J. Carmichael and Cheryl A. Goudie (601) 686-2987.

U.S./EC HORMONE DISPUTE -- U.S. and EC trade officials reported "some progress" from March 6-7 talks to end the dispute over hormone-fed beef, but not enough to allow beef sales to resume. The officials will try again March 20 in Brussels and will meet two more times before submitting their recommendations May 5. U.S. members of the task force include: Joshua Bolton, acting deputy U.S. trade rep.; Leonard Condon, deputy U.S. trade rep for ag affairs; Lester Crawford, administrator of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service and Ann Veneman, associate administrator of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.

DROUGHT OF 1988 -- Those farmers who entered 1988 without inventories and had crop failure will bear most of the financial hardship resulting from the 1988 drought, according to a study by USDA's Economic Research Service. The overall effect of the drought on the U.S. economy will be small, but some farming-dependent rural communities will experience substantial reductions in total business activity. Source: The Drought of 1988: Effects of the U.S. Food and Fiber Sector and on Rural Communities. For a copy call: Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445.

LEANER BEEF -- In the public hue and cry for leaner beef, producers shouldn't be stampeded into breeding all the fat off their cattle, a professor of beef breeding at the University of Nebraska says. "If we start breeding a leaner and leaner package and reduce the fleshing ability of cows, we've made an error," Jim Gosey says. Cow-calf operators can't sacrifice the ability of cows to survive a cold winter in the attempt to make a product that is leaner, he says. Contact: Jerry Leslie (605) 688-4187.

SOIL EROSION -- The common assumption that highly erodible soils are less productive than less erodible soils is incorrect, a new USDA study finds. Productivity on highly erodible soils and on erosively managed, moderately erodible soils is not significantly less than that on nonerodible and nonerosively managed, moderately erodible soils. Confused? Maybe you'd better get a copy of Productivity and Erodibility of U.S. Cropland. For a copy call: Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445.

TRANSPORTATION INFO ONLINE -- USDA now has information available electronically on a wide variety of transportation matters. The information can be accessed by personal computers and word processors equipped with a modem -- moments after USDA releases it. The transportation information joins other USDA information, including the Farm Broadcasters Letter, which are now available on USDA's EDI Service and on USDA Online. Contact: Russell Forte (202) 447-5505.

CORN PRODUCERS FACE REPAYMENT -- Some corn producers may be caught in the unusual position of having to refund money to the government. Because the drought has forced corn prices upward, corn farmers may owe the government 8 cents per bushel. Government formulas are tricky to follow, but here goes: the five month weighted price of corn is \$2.57 per bushel. The basic loan rate is \$2.21. The target price of \$2.93, minus the \$2.57 [or the basic loan rate of \$2.21, whichever is higher] is 36 cents. The government made advance deficiency payments of 44 cents to farmers last year. USDA hasn't yet decided how and when it might collect the overpayments.

WORLD FOOD NEEDS -- The cost of commercial cereal imports by 55 food-deficit countries has increased sharply in recent months. Although cereal needs in Sub-Saharan Africa are down 1.8 million, they are up in North Africa by 2.7 million and in Latin America by 1.9 million. Source: World Food Needs and Availabilities, 1988/89: Winter. For a copy call: Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1657 -- Farming is a highly risky business. So you would think farmers would do what other high risk businesses do -- take out insurance for protection. Not so, a majority of farmers still do not buy insurance for their crops. On this edition, Gary Crawford explores the problems and promises of crop insurance. (Weekly 13-1/2 min. documentary)

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1646 -- USDA news highlights; Crop pre-measurement; Wheat/soybean intercropping; The fate of Alar; Where's the cotton; Ag Day 60-second PSA. (Weekly reel of news features)

CONSUMER TIME #1138 -- Apples and Alar; More Service at Supermarkets; Cutting back on calories at the salad bar; The value of vitamins; Vacation scams. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. features)

UPCOMING -- Friday, March 24, Wool production, livestock/poultry update, foreign ag trade update; Tuesday, March 28, Weekly weather and crop update; Wednesday, March 29, Aquaculture update; Thursday, March 30, Ag prices, world tobacco situation; Friday, March 31, Prospective plantings, grain stocks report.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

DOWN TO EARTH, AGRICULTURAL UPDATE and USDA NEWS SERVICE are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

Thursdays AG UPDATE/USDA NEWS SERVICE, 7:30-7:45 p.m., EST,
ORIGINAL UPLINK Transponder 12D

Saturdays AG UPDATE/USDA NEWS SERVICE, 10:30-11:15 a.m., EST,
ORIGINAL UPLINK Transponder 10D

Mondays AG UPDATE/USDA NEWS SERVICE, 8:30-9:15 a.m., EST,
REPEAT UPLINK Transponder 12D

OFF MIKE

BUSINESS IS GOOD...says Ed Slusarczyk (Ag Radio Net, Utica N.Y.). The network has added ten stations for a total of 66, keeping Jeff Stewart and Ed busy as the only NAFB members serving entire New England area agricultural interests. Net has teamed with state ag interests to sponsor a luncheon at Utica College as part of National Agriculture Day, March 20. VIEWERS...are very interested this winter in ag policy, farm programs, and trade issues says Don Green (Ag Day, W. Lafayette, Ind.) Also says he has a position open for an ag news writer/reporter for on-air and travel assignments. (317) 463-5077. SOUTHEAST REGION...meeting of the National Association of Farm Broadcasters is scheduled for May 19-21. SE Region VP Jerry Gehman (WASG Atmore, Ala.) says events at Gulf State Park resort in Gulf Shores, Ala., include fishing and tour of state docks.

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NORTHEAST REGION...meeting is set for May 5-7 in Ann Arbor, Mich. NE Region VP Joe Cornely (WRFD Columbus, Ohio) says Bob Driscoll (Michigan Farm Net/WPZA, Milan) is planning events. NORTH CENTRAL REGION...will meet June 29-July 1 in Sioux City, Iowa. NC VP Doug Cooper (KWMT/KKEZ Fort Dodge) says Randy Rasmussen (KMNS Sioux City) is in charge of plans. WESTERN REGION...meeting April 14-15, says Western VP Gary Stewart (NW Ag News Net, Seattle Wash.). Walt Shaw (KRAK, Sacramento) will host, events include area farm tour. REQUESTS...continue arriving for USDA videotapes "Ag and the Constitution" and "USDA-The People's Department." Mary Cressel (SCS Indianapolis) says the two 11-minute tapes will be shown at local meetings of soil and water conservation districts. FYI both are available by ordering direct from the Dub Center, Owings Mills, Md. (800) 382-0080.



Vic Powell, Chief, Radio & TV Division